(b) if so, the progress made in this regard during the Kharif season 2001-2002?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As on 2.3.2002, a quantity of 4.51 lakh MTs of Boiled rice has been procured by FCI in Andhra Pradesh.

New Foodgrains Policy

801. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to announce shortly a New Foodgrains Policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when the new policy would be put in place;

(c) whether it is also a fact that it is proposed to dismantle the present grain procurement system;

(d) if so, whether the viewpoints of the various State Governments have been sought in the matter; and

(e) the steps proposed to be taken to safeguard interest of the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) A High Level Committee (HLC) under the Chairmanship of Prof. Abhijit Sen, former Chairman, CACP has been constituted to formulate a long term grain policy for the country. The HLC is expected to submit its final report in March 2002.

(b) to (e) The new policy will be finalized after the HLC's final report is examined by the Ministry. At present there is no concrete proposal to dismantle the existing system.

Amendment in Essential Commodities Act

802. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to amend the Essentieal Commodities Act